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RUEHIC/OIC COLLECTIVE  
RUEHDH/AMCONSUL DHAHRAN 0147

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SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR NEA/ARP; IO/HR (NEVILLE); DRL/MLGA (SIBILLA)

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/28/2029

TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [SA](#) [SI](#) [UNGA](#) [UN](#)

SUBJECT: READ-OUT FROM OIC ON "DEFAMATION OF RELIGIONS"

RESOLUTION: UPSET BY MEDIA PORTRAYAL, WILLING TO

COMPROMISE, EVEN POSTPONE WITH HELP FROM FRIENDS

REF: STATE 109397

Classified By: Consul General Martin R. Quinn for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) In October 28 meeting, Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) senior advisor Ufuk Gokcen (protect) told Jeddah Poloff that OIC Secretary Geneal Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu was "upset" by the way the U.S. position was being portrayed in the Arabi media, specifically noting that Arabc daily Al Sharq Al Awsat quoted State Department official Michael Posner as saying the OIC's resolution was "extreme." While Gokcen understands that the Department is not attacking the OIC, he fears that the statements quoted in the Arabic press may be having a "snowball effect." .

OIC striving for cooperation but "getting bashed"  
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¶2. (C) Gokcen said that while the OIC is pushing for cooperation on a number of issues, including tolerance and women's rights, even welcoming the U.S.-Egypt resolution on freedom of speech, the OIC feels that it is "getting bashed" nonetheless.

Willing to compromise  
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¶3. (C) Gokcen said he personally thinks that many have "the erroneous impression" that Egypt is willing to compromise while the OIC itself is completely intransigent. Gokcen said the OIC is willing to compromise on language and even the title of the resolution. Indicating that the Secretary General understood the US constitutional guarantee of freedom of speech, Gokcen said the OIC felt that the EU countries were in a better position to compromise but were not doing so out of "arrogance." The secondee from the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs remarked, "The EU takes, but never gives."

Obvious that the Secretary is sincere  
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¶4. (C) Despite US opposition to the defamation of religions resolution, Gokcen said the OIC appreciates the fact that Secretary Clinton often addresses the concerns of the Muslim world: "It is obvious that she is sincere." On the other hand, he said, such concern for Muslims would never be communicated by the Europeans.

"Baseless" fears of lobbies and human rights groups  
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15. (C) According to Gokcen, the OIC believes that lobby groups, NGOs and Human Rights organizations in the U.S. have decided to campaign against the OIC on this issue but have not truly read the resolution text, falsely believing that it is a Muslim attempt to curb freedom of speech and target Christians and Jews. This belief, he said, is "baseless."

Response to idea of postponement

16. (S) In response to the idea of postponing the resolution, Gokcen said the Secretary General actually favored it and could suggest a postponement, but was in no position to impose anything on member states. Gokcen recommended that "the most effective way to achieve postponement" is for the U.S. to approach the Malaysians at the U.N. in New York (where they act as OIC coordinators for human rights issues). He also suggested that the U.S. talk to Pakistan, which has the same role in Geneva, and perhaps ("behind the scenes") with Iran. Gokcen said that in reality both he and the Secretary General would be happy if the resolution were postponed because at present the controversy was hurting OIC efforts to work with the United States -- in effect tarnishing the organization's image. He added that Ihsanoglu obviously could not say this because of "concerns from the OIC member states."

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